

Organize Your Lingerie Drawer for a Sexier You

When it comes to weeding out old bras, undies and hosiery, you need to be ruthless

By Katie Kretschmer | June 25, 2012



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Is your dresser crammed with uncomfortable bras, stretched-out panties and tangled hosiery? If so, it's time to take action. There's no reason to hoard lingerie that has begun to fray or doesn't fit. Get rid of those unflattering unmentionables, and don't mention them again. Summer is a sexy time of year, so don't celebrate it by being old droopy drawers. Here a few simple steps to start the streamlining process.

Start by emptying out the drawers completely. Then wipe them down with a damp cloth, replace old sachets and line the bottom with fresh paper, if you like that kind of thing.

Next, sort everything by category, making separate piles of bras, underpants, socks, hosiery, camisoles and sleepwear.

Now ruthlessly examine each of the piles. Jettison anything with tired elastic, holes, runs or pulled threads. Ditto any items you no longer wear because they pinch, itch, ride up, fall down or generally don't match your lifestyle. Or maybe you still do wear them, and shouldn't. Be honest with yourself: If those lacy babydolls aren't your thing, 86 'em.

Once you've eliminated the articles you don't — or shouldn't — wear, it's time to make sure your lingerie wardrobe is balanced. (But before replacing any tattered garments, you might want to head to a reputable shop and have yourself measured if it's been a while.)

Here's a breakdown of the essentials:

Bras

According to Susan Nethero, aka The Bra Whisperer and owner of Intimacy lingerie shops, a woman should have five to seven bras at a minimum, and ideally seven to ten.

As Nethero sees it, the following are must-haves:

- **T-shirt bra.** A smooth-cup style, lightly lined or molded for a sleek look under clingy knits and cotton tops.
- **Convertible bra.** One with straps that can be rearranged to work under racer or halter styles, or removed for strapless looks.
- **Demi bra.** With wider-set straps and cups with a straighter line across the bust for more décolleté, but also to wear under square and scoop-neck tops. (Fuller-busted women might prefer a balcony or semi-demi style.)
- **Plunge bra.** These have a very low center, key for wrap-front styles and deep-V necklines.
- **Sports bra.** Good support is critical. "Bouncing really breaks down firmness in breast tissue, especially as we age," Nethero says. If you work out regularly, you'll need at least three sports bras to cycle through.

If you wear a particular style of bra all the time, you should have several. Black, white and nude are staples, but don't shy away from colors and hues, especially if you wear a lot of dark colors and opaque fabrics.

Undies

You should own, at a minimum, enough pairs of underpants to get you through a week, but more is better — at least a week's supply of basics in addition to any matching sets. "I think you feel twice as pretty if you're wearing panties that match your bra," Nethero says. If you agree, she suggests buying two pairs of panties for every bra.

Stick to the cut you like best: bikini, brief, hipster or thong. Most women's fit problems have to do with "bun

coverage,” Nethero says. “Women tend to shift panties back to cover the bun, which just leads to wrinkling and riding up,” she explains. Instead of tugging, try a different size or cut — or maybe a different brand. And make sure the elastic is snug: If it’s loose at the leg, you’ll get wedgies; loose at the waist, the panties will slip down.

You need a few thongs and completely smooth, seamless styles in a nude color to wear under clothes that are super-clingy. (Look for styles with a long thong for maximum comfort, says Nethero.) A seamless shaper like Spanx will create a sleeker line under some clothes even if you’re slim and trim.

Hosiery

Unless you work in an extremely conservative office and wear stockings every day, there’s no need to hold on to a lot of pantyhose once the weather gets warm: Toss them all, apply some self tanner and restock in the fall. Have enough socks to get through a week without having to do laundry, keeping in mind what you wear regularly — trouser socks, crew socks, anklets or peds.

Daywear and Sleepwear

Some women like and wear camis, tanks, slips and half-slips; some don’t. That said, a nylon slip can counter sheerness or tame static under an unlined skirt or dress.

You may prefer to sleep in an old T and boxers, or your birthday suit, but you’ll need suitable sleepwear — clean, free of holes and relatively modest — for when you are a guest in someone else’s home. Think pajamas, or a silky gown, and a robe to go with them. Stock up on a few variations with season and location in mind: The Hamptons in the summer, Aspen in the winter. . .

Otherwise, quantity is up to you. If you like fresh jammies every night, then stock up.

Putting Everything Back in the Drawer

Amanda Sullivan, owner of the Perfect Daughter, a business that specializes in “chaos control,” says the key to keeping drawers neat is access. “Think about what you reach for daily, and put it where it’s easy to get,” she says. “Then store it in a way that’s simple for you to maintain.”

Fold bras in half, tucking the straps into the cups, and spoon them in your drawer from front to back, placing everyday bras toward the front. “If you have a bra that you only wear with a specific garment, save drawer space and keep it with the top or dress it goes with,” Sullivan says. Keep bra-and-panty sets together; otherwise, maintain a separate drawer, or section of a drawer, for panties. Fold and sort them by style or color (you might consider making one stack black, white and beige; another, colors and prints).

If you’re not into folding, don’t make yourself nuts: Go with stackable bins or drawer dividers to corral different categories. Bins are also great for socks — Sullivan says rolling them is the easiest way to keep pairs together. For hosiery, she favors Ziploc plastic bags. Sort stockings by color and line up bags like file folders. Or stack them flat, with the colors you use most near the top.

Sullivan says a drawer for each category is ideal, but not everyone is blessed with a walk-in closet fitted with custom cabinets. To make the most of limited space, use drawer dividers and stash related items together. For example, if you sleep in T-shirts, there may be crossover between your bedtime Ts and your workout clothes, so keep them together.

And when you acquire new items, keep quantities under control by getting rid of old ones — all year around.

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